

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly  
I am Alejandra Piedra and I live in New Haven.

I am in favor of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN FOR AN INCOME ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN HEALTH CARE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY to age 18, regardless of immigration status, is an important step in ensuring that our immigrant community has access to the health care we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and health care to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

Here I wish to tell you my testimony regarding the care of my son who some time ago almost asphyxiated during an accident and from that experience in the hospitals I can say that the fact of not having insurance for children and all minors run a serious risk in terms of their lives. In many cases, because of economic or legal reasons they can not access public health care. In the case of my son, he was drinking a bottle of water, playing with the cap in his mouth and suddenly he fell backwards and swallowed it. He could not breathe. We went by ambulance to the hospital to find out if he had some kind of health risk or if he could die. At the front desk, they asked me for my son's legal status or medical insurance, which I told them I didn't have. For me I feel it took quite a bit longer to get medical attention since he didn't have insurance. We had to wait for 7 hours in an emergency with my son's the cap in my son's throat without being able to know if he was ok. Many times, now in the economic situation that we live in and because of the pandemic, we do not have the necessary economic resources to be able to pay or cover the medical expenses that cause certain medical care emergencies.

I'd like to bring up the question of rights, the right to life, the right to medical care, the right to education. Healthcare is exorbitant, the cost of an emergency and not having as I mentioned the legal documents to apply to insurance. Because of this, my son is then subjected to an endless waiting line either for care or on a never-ending call to fix the charges. I am not against paying for healthcare, but I am against the fact that for children, they do not provide affordable insurance. I believe that their health should be a priority because when they have good health, they can be productive within the country and within their families and within anything else at the societal level. But, currently we don't make their health a priority. The United States is considered a first world country, one of the great powers in the world where health should be considered as a human issue, not as an economic issue. Many times, we as parents make the decision to immigrate and our children simply have to follow us. Children are the most innocent in this whole issue of migration. That is why I ask that this legislation be passed so that our children can also have easy access to health care and that they can stay within this country in a healthy and free manner.

I support S.B. 284 and ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Going forward, I ask the committee to work to open access to all immigrants, regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Alejandra Piedra